

A GUIDE TO NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Our neonatal intensive care unit

The NICU, located on the third floor of Mediclinic Airport Road Hospital, equipped with the latest life-saving technology.

The NICU is staffed by neonatologists (Doctors specialised in newborn baby care) and neonatal nurses, all of whom are trained to care for the most complex and high risk situations among newborns. They are also trained and experienced in delivering twins and triplets.

While caring for your miracle baby is very special, helping you and your whole family understand and be a part of your baby's care is just as important.

About the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

Congratulations on your newborn baby! At this moment, we understand your anxiety for your baby and would like to reassure you that he/she will receive our utmost care and attention. This brochure aims to provide some information about our NICU unit. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to approach any one of our staff or call us at 02 494 4355.

Caring for your baby

On admission, your baby is nursed under a radiant warmer for close observation. We have precision equipment to monitor your baby's heartbeat, breathing rate and oxygen intake. Do not be alarmed if you see many wires attached to your baby; these are needed to monitor your baby's progress.

Isolation room monitoring

This is for newborns up to one month old who come to us from home or other hospitals. These babies are admitted depending on NICU criteria based on the severity of their illness.

Special care baby unit monitoring

This service is for babies who are not well at birth and need close observation. If they are well after 2 hours of observation, they will be transferred to a normal nursery upon doctor's orders.

Parents whose premature babies are in the NICU face many barriers that separate them. These

include the baby's fragility and acute care needs, the plastic walls of their incubator, a variety of caretakers and the connection to high technology. Our NICU parent involvement programme provides parents with an opportunity to ease the ache of separation and lessen these barriers.

Benefits of parental involvement in NICU care

- Helps premature babies grow, leave their incubator sooner and achieve deeper, more restful sleep
- Breastfeeding mothers are directly involved in newborn care
- Parents are more comfortable caring for their babies and have less anxiety when taking them home when they are ready for discharge

What is the schedule for parents' involvement in NICU care?

At NICU, we advise our patients to commit to at least one hour a day of newborn care and to continue for as long as both mother and child are comfortable. It can last up to three hours each time as that coincides with the baby's feeding times (every three hours).

Are only mothers involved in newborn care? How about fathers?

Both parents can be involved in parental care of their newborn. Whether with the mother or the father, this creates a special bond between parent and baby.

What happens after NICU care?

As soon as your baby is stable after birth, you can start with nursery care. This basically means once the baby can breathe on its own and is no longer on a drip. We are planning to be able to care for babies from 24 gestation in the future. The NICU staff will work with you to decide on the appropriate times for your visits.

NICU visitor guidelines

- Parents are welcomed 24 hours a day, but for privacy reasons will be asked to wait outside during doctor's rounds and nurse's report times which occur around 07:00 to 07:30 and 19:00 to

19:30 for nurses report time and 08:00 to 09:30 for doctor's general round

- Family and friends are welcome to view through the glass window but only the parents are allowed to go inside
- Please make sure friends and family members visiting your baby are in good health
- Please follow the NICU hand washing and gown

Guidelines:

- See guidelines posted at the sink just inside the entry to the NICU
- Please turn off all cell phones before entering in the NICU
- For privacy reasons, information will be disclosed to the parents ONLY
- Our health care team will be happy to answer all your enquiries and teach you how to care for your baby at home.

Breastfeeding

Nursery care often progresses naturally into breastfeeding as the baby is cradled against the breasts and will naturally want to suckle next. When we feel that mother and child are ready, our nurses will help advise the parents that it's time to move on to breastfeeding. We strongly recommend breastfeeding for all babies. Breast milk provides the necessary antibodies to help your baby fight any potential infections. It is also more easily

digested by babies. We have a team of health educators to assist you with initiating lactation and expressing breast milk.

How will my baby react?

Your baby's reaction may vary from visit to visit. Once in your arms resting on your chest, your baby may fall asleep or remain awake. NICU staff will help you understand your baby's behaviour and responses. Understanding your baby's behaviour and responses will allow you to experience the benefits from NICU care.

Simple steps to visit Yyour baby

Infection Control

Mothers are encouraged to visit their babies as soon as they feel well enough to move around, and we encourage parents to visit their babies as often as possible. However there are some simple steps you can take to protect your baby's health:

- Please use hand gel sanitiser before entering NICU or wash you hands (up to the elbow) with liquid soap even if you are not touching your baby upon entering NICU
- Please put a clean gown on over your clothes before entering the NICU
- Please do not enter NICU if you have a cold, sore throat, cold sores or recent contact with chicken pox or shingles

